

St. Louis County Site Selection #2

Demographics and History

St. Louis County is home to over a million people, making it the most populated county in Missouri with nearly 20% of the state's population. Additionally, St. Louis County has the most affluent population with an average household income nearly \$15,000 higher than the State average. St. Louis County per capita income (1999) is \$27,595.

St. Louis County came into existence just nine years after the Louisiana Purchase and nine years before Missouri attained statehood. After their historic exploration of the Louisiana Purchase and beyond, both Meriwether Lewis and William Clark served as territorial governors of the area that included Missouri. In October 1812, Governor Clark organized the five administrative districts of Upper Louisiana Territory into counties, one of which was St. Louis County. In 1818 Franklin and Jefferson counties were formed out of the original St. Louis County, leaving St. Louis County with the land that today comprises St. Louis County and St. Louis City.

The separation of St. Louis City from St. Louis County occurred in 1876. At the time, the separation was strongly advocated by city leaders who felt the non-urban parts of the County were an undue burden on the urbanized and prosperous City of St. Louis. The newly separated County had a population of 31,888, the third largest in Missouri. The first permanent European settlement in what is now St. Louis County was Florissant in 1785. Creve Coeur also existed at the time of the Louisiana Purchase.

St. Louis County experienced a growth period from 1940 to 1970 primarily due to migration from the City of St. Louis. The population grew from 247,000 just before World War II to 951,000 by 1970. Since 1970, the population growth has stabilized, growing just 2% in the 1980's and an estimated 1.7% in the 1990's. The 1990's also experienced more people moving out of St. Louis County than moving in, due to a growth shift, known as the urban sprawl, to the outlying counties of St. Charles, Jefferson, Franklin, Lincoln and Warren. One of the primary reasons for the population movement in the 1990's is the large tracts of land available for development, and new, affordable housing.

The population of St. Louis County has been diversifying since the 1970's. The white population has declined, while the population of Asians and Pacific Islanders has had the highest rate of growth, increasing 79% since 1970. The African American population has also grown significantly, increasing by 27%.

Geographical Description

St. Louis County is situated at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, it encompasses 524 square miles. It is on the eastern edge of the state bordering St. Louis City and Illinois to the east and north. The western and southern sections of the county are bordered by Jefferson, Franklin, and St. Charles Counties. The area is served by major interstates, an international airport, railways and river ways.

The area is known as the Gateway to the West.

General Information

St. Louis County is a distinct governmental area. The County is comprised of 91 municipalities and areas of unincorporated St. Louis County. Approximately 66% of the residents reside in municipalities. The County Government Center is in Clayton. Local government services are provided by the municipalities, County Government and various special service districts. There are 60 municipal police departments in addition to the St. Louis County Police Department. There are 43 municipal fire departments/fire protection districts. There are 24 public school districts including a county wide Special School District and a variety of private and parochial schools. There are several public and private universities and colleges with campuses in St. Louis County. There are 12 private hospitals located within the county borders; St. Louis County Health Department provides an array of public health services.

The five largest private employers in St. Louis County are The Boeing Company, Schnuck's Markets, Inc., McDonald's Restaurants of St. Louis and Metro East, SSM Health Care System and Washington University. The average unemployment range for St. Louis County in 2002 was 4.8%; the statewide average was 5.5%. St. Louis County contains about a quarter of all the jobs in the State of Missouri and almost half of the jobs in the St. Louis metropolitan region. The County's employment base became more diverse throughout the 1980s and 1990s as jobs shifted from manufacturing to the service sector. The service sector in St. Louis County experienced the greatest increase in employment between 1987 and 1997, rising from approximately 25% to 33% of all jobs in the County.

Economic Data

St. Louis ranked 16th nationally among other metropolitan areas for the Cost of Living Index for the third quarter 2001. The average for all participating places is 100, St. Louis was 100.7. According to 2000 Census figures, the average cost of a home in the County was \$116,500. The median household income in 1999 was \$50,532.

Transportation

Public transportation is available through Bi-State which operates a regional bus system and limited Metro-Link rapid transit system. Metro-Link is currently expanding to provide services to a larger section of the county.

Population Served

KIDS COUNT 2002 data, children make up 25.2% of the County's population. Of these children, 31.2% are minority children and 9.3% of the County's children live in poverty. Fifteen percent of the children reside in households receiving Food Stamps and 30.3% are enrolled in free/reduced lunch programs.

Statewide, St. Louis County ranks 12th (1=best, 115=worst) out of 115 counties in overall child well-being factors according to the KIDS COUNT 2002 data. Both the statewide

and St. Louis County rates for child abuse and neglect have increased over the last four years, however the rate in St. Louis County remains significantly lower than the statewide rate. The rate for out of home placements is the same as it was in 1997, 3 per 1000 children. The statewide average is 5.4 per 1000 children. St. Louis County ranks slightly above the statewide averages in low birth weight infants and infant mortality. There has been a decrease in the percent of high school dropouts, the births to teens ages 15-19 and violent deaths of teens. The number of children receiving public mental health services almost doubled from 1997 to 2001.

As of August 2003, St. Louis County had 1256 children in custody (forty-seven percent of the youth in custody are over 13 years of age or older). Given St. Louis County's location as part of a larger metropolitan area and the mobility of the children and families served, the population involves some residents of surrounding areas. Agency best practice is to continue involvement with families rather than transfer cases among surrounding counties each time a family or child moves across a geographical county boundary. Some services, such as Intensive In-Home Services, are provided on a regional basis.

Community Involvement

Children's Division staff are housed in four different buildings in St. Louis County representing three areas of the County, north, south and central. This provides better accessibility to families served and to be part of larger service centers. The Children's Division shares buildings with Family Support Division, Division of Youth Services, Department of Health and Senior Services, Division of Probation and Parole, Division of Workforce Development, Department of Natural Resources and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The various locations promote partnering with school districts and local law enforcement as well as other community agencies. St. Louis County has a collaborative agreement with the public housing authority which allows the awarding of housing certificates to identified families. The agreement also involves a community action agency which provides assessment and treatment services, parenting programs, drug testing and employment assistance.

The Family Court of St. Louis County operates the SAFETI court program which focuses on families where substance abuse is the major issue. St. Louis County has a Truancy Court program which is based in several of the school districts and targets grade school and middle school children with identified truancy problems. The program will involve children referred by the Children's Division for the first time in the 2003-04 school year.

St. Louis County is a Greenbook Initiative site. The Greenbook Initiative focuses on the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child maltreatment. There are 25 agencies in the St. Louis region which provide domestic violence services ranging from shelters to batterer's intervention programs.

The Family Court of St. Louis County and the Children's Division have partnered to provide services to "crossover" youth. Youth who are identified with involvement in both the delinquency and child protection units of the court are staffed to determine if

they would benefit from services by Crossover staff and the Children's Division. Staff from the Court and the Children's Division are assigned, by geographic areas, to work with these youth and their families.

The Children's Division participates in Community Response Teams with community partners, including representatives from state and local public health agencies, mental health providers, schools, family courts, Division of Youth Services to staff and develop plans for families needing assistance.

Caseloads and Staffing

There are 173 direct service staff allocations for St. Louis County. Hiring freezes resulted in the County carrying a vacancy rate of 13% to 16% for a large portion of the period under review. Adoption, foster and kinship licensing, Intensive In-Home Services, Family Centered Out of Home and investigation programs have specialized workers. Ongoing Family Centered Service cases and alternative care cases are assigned to generic workers. There are 23 first level supervisors allocated to the County, there has been approximately a 17% vacancy rate for supervisors. The Children's Division contracts with 12 private agencies in St. Louis County to provide case management services for out of home care cases. The contractors have a combined allocation maximum of 250 families, individual caseloads for contracted case managers are maximized, by contract, at 14 families per worker. The staff allocation for St. Louis County is reduced to reflect cases carried by private agencies. Caseloads for in house staff are significantly higher.

Federal Outcomes

St. Louis County has met three of the six Federal safety, permanency and well-being outcomes during SFY-03:

Recurrence of Maltreatment – Of all children, who were substantiated victims of child abuse/neglect during the first six months, what percent had another substantiated report within six months

- Federal Benchmark – 5.9% or fewer
- St. Louis County -- 5.7%

Foster Care Re-entries -- Of all children who entered foster care during the year under review, percent that re-entered foster care within 12 months of a prior foster care stay

- Federal Benchmark – 8.6% or less
- St. Louis County -- 7.75%

Length of Time to Achieve Adoption – Of all children who exited foster care during the year of review to a final adoption, the percent of children who exited care in less than 24 months from the time of the latest removal from home

- Federal Benchmark – 32% or more
- St. Louis County -- 34.54%

Incidence of Child Abuse and Neglect in Foster Care (by foster parent or residential facility staff) – Of all children in foster care in the state during the period under review, the percentage of children who were the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or residential facility staff

- Federal Benchmark – .57% or less
- St. Louis County -- .77%

Stability of Foster Care Placements – Of all children who have been in foster care less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal, the percent of children who had no more than two placement settings

- Federal Benchmark – 86.7% or more
- St. Louis County – 76.37%

Length of Time to Achieve Reunification – Of all children who were reunified with their parents or caretaker at the time of discharge from foster care, the percentage of children who were reunified in less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home

- Federal Benchmark -- 76.2% or more
- St. Louis County -- 62.95%